



PARKSIDE HOUSE SCHOOL

Peer on Peer Abuse Policy



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Introduction

At Parkside House School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students' behaviour will sometimes negatively impact on the learning and wellbeing of others. Their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

Keeping Children safe in Education September 2016 DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) says that 'governing bodies should ensure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children'. The guidance also states the importance of minimising the risks of peer-on-peer abuse.

At Parkside House School the conduct of students towards each other is covered in the school's robust behaviour policy as well as clearly outlined within this policy.

Some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people.

The intervention of child protection agencies in situations involving sexual activity between children can require difficult professional judgments.

Some situations are statutorily clear – for example, a child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity. But it will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice.

In such cases Parkside House will operate the usual safeguarding procedure to inform parents/carers and if necessary contact children's social care for advice. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent), and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation.

It may also be difficult to be sure that what has or has been alleged to have taken place definitely does have a sexual component. Important decisions will be made based on information available.

Referral under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, guided by an assessment of the extent to which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Key specific considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the children;
- Any disability or special needs of the children;
- Their social and family circumstance;
- Any evidence in the behaviour or presentation of the children that might suggest they have been harmed.

Prevention

As a school we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:-

- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSD syllabus which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.
- Having systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued.
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk.
- Developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.

This includes specific safeguarding sessions within school of which some are delivered by the NSPCC.

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature.

Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found. If the allegation:-

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

- Physical Abuse
 - Violence, particularly pre-planned
 - Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- Emotional Abuse
 - Blackmail or extortion
 - Threats and intimidation Sexual Exploitation
 - Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
 - Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting
 - Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight)
 - Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.

Parkside House School procedure:-

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another student, all staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mrs Belinda Young should be informed or Deputy Miss Mandy Maxwell in their absence.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation using the school's safeguarding procedure.
- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, the DSL will refer the case to the multi-agency safeguarding hub where the police will become involved.
- Parents, of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral. • The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils' child protection files.
- Parkside House School may possibly exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures. • Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation will take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment will be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.
- The plan will be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.